

Remarks

The Examiner has rejected claims 22 and 23 under 35 USC 112 second paragraph as being indefinite, since they are dependent upon a cancelled claim. Appropriate correction has been taken.

Claims 20, 24, 25, and 31 through 40 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Karlsson '512. Claims 26, 28 and 29 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Karlsson '512.

In response thereto, the Applicant has amended claim 20 to incorporate features disclosed in former claims 31, 38 and 39 with the wording being essentially identical to that given in the last five lines on page 6 of the specification. In particular, claim 20 as amended recites a peripheral edge region which is free of glue. Towards this end, the Examiner is referred to figure 4e of the specification with the associated disclosure in the specification. Examination of that figure shows that shaded region 46 is the glued region with a peripheral edge region surrounding the respective region 46 being free of glue. Therefore, glue does not completely extend up to the edge of the product. During the separating process for formation of the single piece material section subsequently leading to the hip belt portion of the product, the separation can thereby be taken in a region which is free of glue (reference symbol 48).

Karlsson fails to disclose or teach a single piece continuous hip belt. On the contrary, Karlsson proposes a pair of hip belt portions 9 which are attached to the left and right of the main diaper portion. Moreover, claim 20 is further distinguished from the Karlsson reference by specifying that the single piece material section is attached to the outer side of the main section. In contrast thereto, the belt portion 9 of Karlsson is attached at the left and right sides of the product for disposal within a pocket 12 fashioned between the top sheet and the back sheet. One of average skill

in the art, aware of the Karlsson disclosure, would not be motivated to substitute the two part hip belt of Karlsson with a single piece continuous hip belt as claimed, since such a substitution would prevent Karlsson from functioning for his intended purpose of providing a hip belt which can be folded and tucked into the pockets 12 fashioned in the main body portion.

In accordance with the invention, it has been ascertained that utilization of one single continuous hip belt rather than two separate hip belt pieces allows for improved acceptance of the forces acting on the diaper and for effective transfer of those forces into the main diaper portion. Tearing of tabs disposed to the left or right of the product is thereby eliminated. Claim 20 as amended is therefore distinguished from Karlsson both with respect to 35 USC 102 as well as 35 USC 103.

Additional limitations have been taken in method claim 30 which has now been formulated as a "picture claim" with regard to figures 4d and 4e by incorporation of the features formerly disclosed in now cancelled claims 36, 38, and 39. This claim is similarly distinguished from the Karlsson disclosure for the reasons given above.

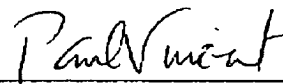
The applicant therefore submits that the independent claims are allowable. The dependent claims inherit the limitations of the respective base claim and are therefore also distinguished from the Karlsson reference. Passage to issuance is therefore respectfully requested.

In the alternative, the applicant hereby requests a personal interview with the Examiner at the USPTO. Towards this end, the assignee of record and his European patent attorney are planning a trip to the US PTO in February, or at the latest in March, in order to discuss this case along with several other pending applications. In view of the extensive effort and expense associated with this personal visit to the US PTO, the

applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner refrain from issuing an additional office action prior to scheduling of that personal interview, unless that Office Action is a Notice of Allowance. The cooperation of the US PTO in awaiting that interview prior to issuance of the next office action is respectfully appreciated.

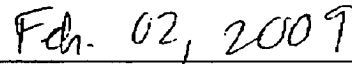
No new matter has been added to this amendment.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date

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